



National Weather Service

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



August 1996

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons		Estimated Damage		Character of Storm
					Killed	Injured	Property	Crops	

NEW MEXICO, Southeast

NMZ027>028

Guadalupe Mountains Of Eddy County - Eddy County Plains

01 0000MST 0 0 2.4M Drought
23 1200MST

See narrative in Texas, Western section.

Eddy County

11 NE Carlsbad

08 1312MST 0.1 40 0 0 Tornado (F0)
1313MST

Two Carlsbad city employees reported a brief touchdown (less than one minute) by a small tornado 8-10 miles northeast of the Municipal Golf Course.

Lea County

1 E Lovington

08 1645MST 2 0 Lightning

Two employees of Lea County Co-op Electric were killed by lightning while attempting to repair lines that had been disabled during a previous storm. Since there were no witnesses of the incident it was first thought the two men had been electrocuted by the lines on which they were working, however, a subsequent investigation ruled out this possibility. People in the area noted a couple of close lightning strikes, and with other evidence, it was surmised that the two were lightning strike victims. M36OT, M48CT

Eddy County

Carlsbad

16 2217MST 0 0 5K Thunderstorm Wind

Wet microburst winds broke tree limbs and power lines in some parts of Carlsbad. Power was out in some areas until nearly 5am MDT.

Eddy County

1 N Artesia

17 0007MST 0 0 Flash Flood
0230MST

Flooding occurred in the city of Artesia on roads that cross Eagle Draw. This draw flows east through the city toward the Pecos River.

Lea County

14 NW Jal

19 1716MST 0 0 Hail(0.88)

Eddy County

Carlsbad

26 1145MST 0 0 Flash Flood
1300MST

Over two inches of rain across much of the city of Carlsbad caused extensive street flooding. Numerous cars stalled in the high water.

Eddy County

13 NW Carlsbad

28 1245MST 0 0 Flash Flood
1600MST

Heavy rains over the Rocky Arroyo basin caused flooding on State Highway 137 that blocked the path to the Queen community. Water depths approached 10 feet at one water crossing. Also flooding was reported in the Brantley Lake area.

Eddy County

8 S Loco Hills

31 0330MST 0 0 Hail(0.88)

TEXAS, West

TXZ045>048-050>052-
058>063-067>070-
074>075-079>082

Gaines - Dawson - Borden - Scurry - Andrews - Martin - Howard - Reeves County And Upper Trans Pecos - Loving - Winkler - Ector - Midland - Glasscock - Ward - Crane - Upton - Reagan - Davis Mountains - Pecos - Presidio Valley - Marfa Plateau - Big Bend Area - Terrell

01 0000CST 0 0 12.6M 189.7M Drought
22 1200CST

Toward the latter part of August plentiful rains were at last falling over all of the area. This pattern was started by the tropical plume that brought Hurricane Dolly westward through the Bay of Campeche to near Tampico, Mexico, across the Central America to where she dissipated in the eastern North Pacific. Although Dolly was over 1000 miles south of the area, this same plume of deep, tropical moisture locked over Southwest Texas and rained over much of the area on a daily basis through the end of the month



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TEXAS, West

Since a drought is a very loosely defined phenomenon, there is no explicit beginning or end, but for the purposes of Storm Data there is no room for flexibility--only qualifications that can be made in this narrative. The effects in West Texas and Southeastern New Mexico were mainly in the form of crop damage due to the dry weather. Those farms that were able to plant crops late in the season were able to grow crops successfully. With the threat to crops ending in August and the Eastern Pacific cold phase waning, it was felt that a definite trend away from the drought had begun. Many people would argue that the drought lasted through the end of 1996 as four years of dry weather could not be corrected in one week, but from a meteorological standpoint as to precipitation patterns, significant changes had occurred during the 1996 Summer that were expected to continue indefinitely; therefore, the drought will be ended here.

During the afternoon of August 23 showers and thunderstorms developed, thereby beginning the long journey toward a wetter regime over Southwest Texas and Southeastern New Mexico.

During the drought, extreme failures of crops and pastureland were reported. Due to the lack of grasses for cattle about half of the cattle in the region had to be sold early. This flooding of the cattle market sent cattle prices plummeting. In a few locations, wells dried up making irrigation impossible.

The commodity losses follow:

Cotton	\$162,275,000
Rangeland	24,744,000
Grain Sorghum	2,400,000
Wheat	530,000
Peanuts	59,300

Rangeland/Pastureland losses were incurred as stunted grasses made ranchers slash the lease prices for their property grazing rights.

The property damage was solely due to the cattle market. With the stunted grass growth, there was not enough food to feed cattle. About half of the cattle in the region (90,000) had to be auctioned due to this feed shortage. With this flood of the auction market the beef prices plummeted. The \$12,600,000 figure was the estimated loss by ranchers having to sell their cattle in a deflated market. A county-by-county assessment was not available, so the total was entered in the first county that sustained losses. The greatest cattle losses were probably in the large counties west of the Pecos River, where almost all of the land is rangeland and there are very few farms.

In the listing of crop damage, some of the counties were listed as \$0.00 damage. This listing is because these counties were grouped with an adjacent county in the available reports. Loving County is listed with Reeves County, Terrell County with Brewster County, and Jeff Davis County with Presidio County.

Two counties in the area, Lea, NM and Culberson, TX reported that there were no drought conditions in their counties

The grand total for damage to crops and property in 22 Texas counties and 1 New Mexico county stands at approximately \$205 Million. Undoubtedly there are some other factors that have not been considered, but the most significant damages according to the agriculture experts are listed in this report.

Gaines County

3 S Seminole

08	1645CST	0	0	5K	Thunderstorm Wind
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Two storage sheds were destroyed south of Seminole from a wet microburst.

Howard County

1 NE Big Spring

17	1700CST 1800CST	0	0	Flash Flood
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An empty car was swept into a drainage ditch and into a culvert one block away by flooding waters in the streets of Big Spring. Controversy arose when it was found out that local fire fighters refused to assist in rescuing the vehicle before it was taken by the water. The fire fighters claimed they were not to attempt such measures with property that could be damaged in a rescue attempt unless lives were at stake. They said they could be held liable for the damages. While the driver was away trying to find other potential assistance, the car was pushed into the ditch.

Reeves County

7 W Balmorhea

19	1455CST	0	0	Hail(1.75)
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<u>TEXAS, West</u>								
Winkler County								
1 S Kermit	19	2220CST 2330CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Flooding that had been mainly contained in the streets eventually spilled over the curbs in some parts of town. Such flooding waters seeped in the front door of the County Law Enforcement Building.								
Terrell County								
25 N Dryden	23	1430CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Heavy rains in flash flood territory of northern Terrell County sent 4 feet of water rushing across at least one crossing on Ranch Road 2400.								
Reeves County								
7 W Toyah	25	2015CST 2230CST			0	0		Flash Flood
A small bridge was washed out by flooding waters west of Toyah.								
Reeves County								
Balmorhea	26	1330CST 1600CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Heavy rains flooded parts of Reeves County. Highway 17 in the Saragosa and Balmorhea areas had water covering the roadway.								
Reeves County								
Pecos	26	1600CST 1800CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Numerous streets were flooded in Pecos due to over 2 inches of rain in the area.								
Jeff Davis County								
9 SW Ft Davis	26	1728CST 1731CST	0.3	40	0	0		Tornado (F0)
A small tornado formed in a thunderstorm in an unusually tropical air mass for the Davis Mountains. A photo taken by the Fort Davis Postmaster showed a condensation funnel to the ground and a clear slot wrapping into the small mesocyclone.								
Martin County								
2 S Stanton	27	1515CST 1700CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Flooding from heavy rains flowed over Highway 137 south of Stanton.								
Midland County								
Greenwood	27	1550CST 1720CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Water from heavy rains ran off of roads and rose into many yards in the Greenwood community and to the east covering Highway 307.								
Gaines County								
1 NE Seagraves	28	0540CST 0745CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Gaines County								
3 N Seminole	28	0550CST 1030CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Gaines County								
3 E Seminole	28	0900CST 1130CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Heavy rains from training thunderstorm dumped copious amounts of water over portions of Gaines County. The two major U.S. Highways in the county were covered with water. Three miles east of Seminole U.S. Highway 180 was 2 feet deep. Between Seminole and Seagraves as much of 7 inches of rain was measured. One Building west of Seminole had minor flooding when water seeped under the doors.								



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Brewster County								
9 W Alpine	28	1200CST 1400CST			0	0		Flash Flood
West of Alpine, a tributary to Toronto Creek flowing northward across U.S. Highway 90 swelled from tropical rains and flooded the highway. Barricades were posted in the flooded area.								
Andrews County								
12 SE Andrews	28	1510CST 1700CST			0	0		Flash Flood
FM 1788 became flooded 6 miles south of its intersection with State Highway 176								
Crane County								
11 N Crane	28	1739CST 1915CST			0	0		Flash Flood
U.S. Highway 385 was closed briefly due to high water 11 miles north of Crane.								
Midland County								
11 S Midland	28	1800CST 1930CST			0	0		Flash Flood
State Highway 349 south of Midland had running water in flood-prone areas								
Ector County								
1 N Odessa	28	1800CST 1930CST			0	0	5K	Flash Flood
A couple of houses were flooded in Odessa when 2.5 inches of rain fell in 30 minutes. Intersections around the city were flooded, some with as much as 3 feet of water.								
Presidio County								
5 SE Presidio	29	1030CST 1400CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Heavy rains in southern Presidio County caused flooding along the River Road (State Highway 170). The highway was closed between Presidio and Redford.								
Howard County								
5 N Big Spring	29	1900CST 2100CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Flash flooding was reported along U.S. Highway 87 north of Big Spring								
Howard County								
7 SW Big Spring	29	1910CST 2030CST			0	0		Flash Flood
Flash flooding was reported near the Elbow community southwest of Big Spring.								